

Historic, Archive Document

Do not assume content reflects current
scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

31058
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Office of Information



PICTURE STORY NO. 76

FOR RELEASE MAY 7, 1950

THE LABEL TELLS THE STORY

Yes, the label on economic poisons tells the story. That's why experts in the Insecticide Division, Livestock Branch, of USDA's Production and Marketing Administration, advise users to be sure that they understand label information on insecticides, fungicides, rodenticides and weed-killers (economic poisons) before they use these products.

Information on economic poison labels pertaining to use and safeguards has been developed for the protection of the consuming public by outstanding experts in the field. If this information is to be of value, it must be followed.

Provisions of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act, which is administered by the Insecticide Division, are aimed at protecting the public from misstatements and dangerous information on economic poison labels. Specialists review labels on all economic poisons moving in interstate commerce to determine whether or not the information conforms to provisions of the Act.

In general the Act requires that----

*Every economic poison be registered before it can be marketed in interstate and foreign commerce.

*Statements of warning or caution appear on the label of an economic poison when necessary to prevent injury to human beings, animals or vegetation.

*Highly toxic substances bear the skull and crossbones, the word 'poison', and an antidote statement.

*For added protection, certain white powdered poisons be colored to prevent them from being mistaken for flour, sugar, or other foods.

*Directions for use be effective for the purpose intended.

*At the same time, directions provide adequate protection to the public and not be such as will cause injury to humans or valuable plants or animals.

Labels on all economic poisons must meet these general conditions and others. More than 27,000 various economic poisons are now registered under the act and every day more are being added to the list.

Roving investigators collect samples from store shelves throughout the country and forward them to the Division's laboratories for examination and testing. The collected products are analyzed to determine if printed contents on the labels conform to the actual content. The poisons are used according to directions to see if they are effective. The toxicity of the poisons is determined and antidote information is checked. The investigators also look for poisons that have not been registered under the Act. Penalties are imposed for act violations.

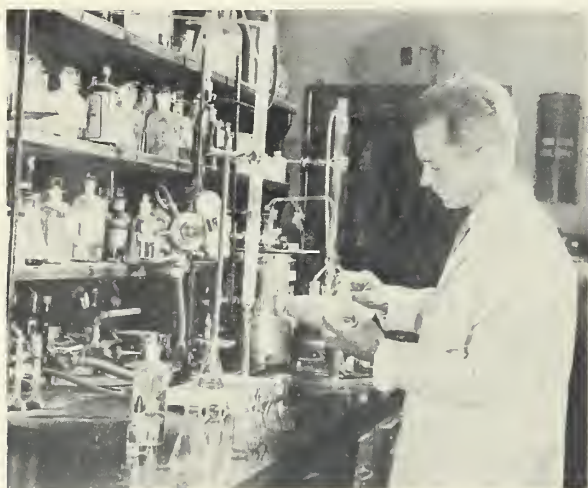
This work, authorized by Congress, is carried on for the protection of farmers, household consumers, and all others who use insecticides, fungicides, herbicides and other economic poisons. However, the effectiveness of these precautionary measures depend entirely on how well users "read the label and follow directions."



1. An investigator seals an economic poison package selected from a retail store shelf. The sample will be forwarded to one of the laboratories for analysis and testing to determine if contents and label claims conform to provisions of the act. Samples are obtained from all parts of the country. N-10954



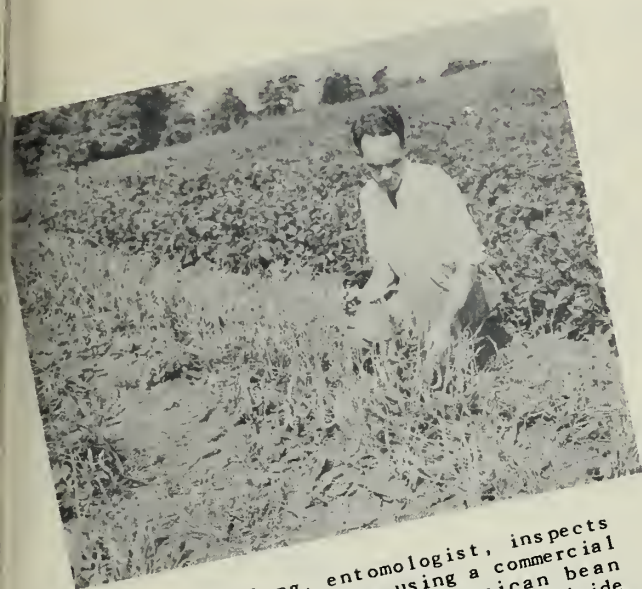
2. Here cattle are being sprayed to determine the effectiveness of a commercial insecticide in controlling horn fly. Similar tests are made of other preparations used to control insects on livestock. The tests also include a check to make certain that the preparations are not injurious to stock. N-8016



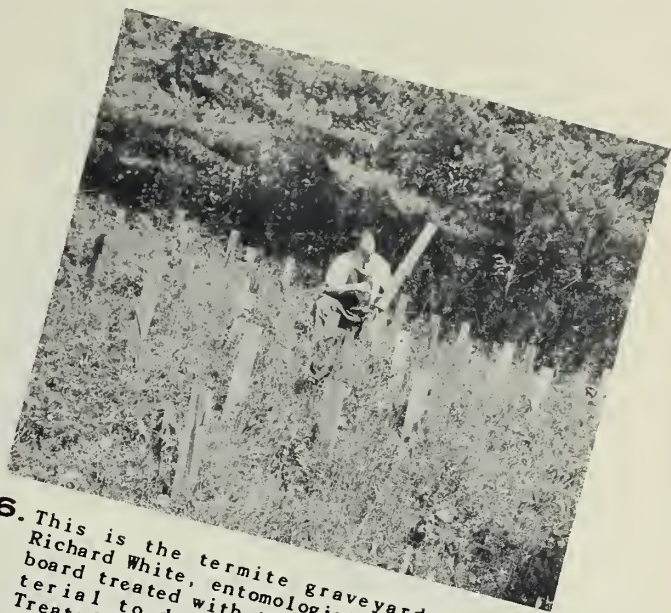
3. Dr. T. H. Harris, chemist, determines the composition of a product to compare with the label claim. This work also furnishes the basis for further laboratory tests to determine if label claims for use are accurate. N-10952



4. Dr. E. William Ligon, Jr., pharmacologist, records symptoms of toxicity and deaths in white rats resulting from controlled dosing of economic poisons. Toxicity is determined to judge hazards in use around humans and domestic animals. This same method is employed in determining the effectiveness of rodenticides. N-10496



5. Mr. Paul Lung, entomologist, inspects the results of tests using a commercial insecticide to combat Mexican bean beetle damage on beans. The insecticide is used according to label instructions and in this case the badly damaged leaves indicate that it didn't do the job. The manufacturer will be required to take corrective steps. Throughout the laboratory garden, similar tests are carried out on commercial insecticides. N-10957



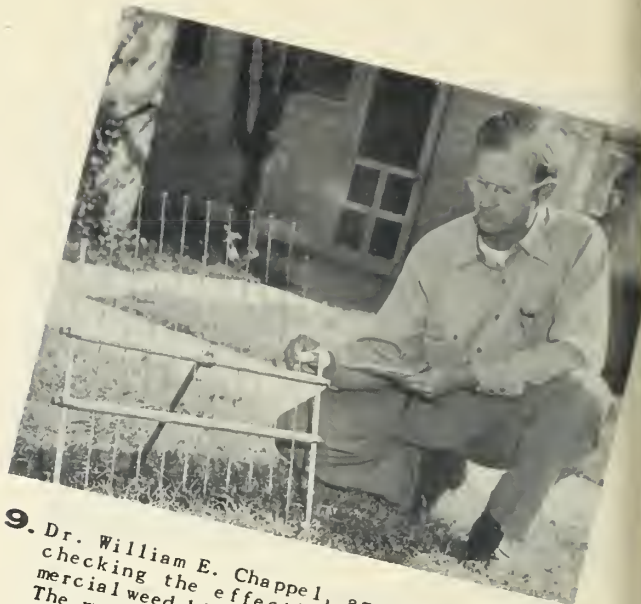
6. This is the termite graveyard. Mr. Richard White, entomologist, examines a board treated with termite proofing material to determine effectiveness. Treated boards are buried in the ground and inspected periodically. This is one of many such tests made on similar economic poisons. N-10950



7. Some mothproofing material that didn't stop the moths. Mr. W. H. Ball, entomologist, inspects woolen goods treated with a commercial mothproofing material to see whether or not the material protects the fabric from moth damage as claimed on the label. The sample shows serious moth damage after being treated according to instructions and exposed to moths in a special room. N-10947



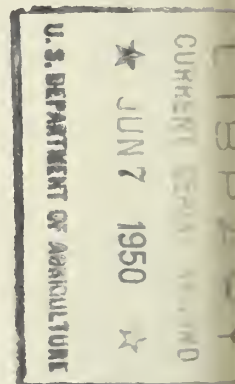
8. Tree is being sprayed with an insecticide to check its effectiveness. Spraying of the tree to the right and in the foreground with a material according to label directions resulting in the foliage being burned off. Occasionally sprays are found that cause injury and do more damage than good. In these cases, manufacturers are required to withdraw the product from sale and correct the formula or instructions.
N-10956



9. Dr. William E. Chappel, agronomist, is checking the effectiveness of a commercial weed killer used on a grass plot. The weeds remaining on treated and untreated plots are counted by means of a point quadrant. N-10944



10. In this room are stored the more than 27,000 registrations of economic poisons under the Act. In the center, Dr. W. G. Reed (left), Insecticide Division Chief, and Dr. E. L. Griffin, Assistant Chief, examine a registration. Other Division personnel are processing applications for registration and checking records for violations.



8x10 glossy photographs of this series are free to writers and editors on request to the Press Service, Office of Information, USDA, Washington 25, D. C.